

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending. The only independent claim is claim 1. Claims 9 and 10 are indicated to be allowable, and claim 5 is indicated to possibly be allowable. However, claims 1-4, 7, and 11-15 are rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by *Mudryk* (U.S. Patent No. 6,267,529). Also, claim 6 is rejected as obvious 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) from *Mudryk*, and claim 8 is rejected as obvious 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) from *Mudryk* in view of *Foster* (U.S. Patent No. 2,567,931).

Allowable claims 9 and 10 are now placed in independent form, and also the spelling of the word “protuberance” is corrected.

The Drawings, the Abstract, and the Specification

The drawings are objected to for failing to show the claimed “protuberance.” However, Applicant respectfully points out that FIG. 6 does show the protuberance **610**, as described at the penultimate line of page 6, in the application as originally filed.

The abstract is now amended as the Office Action indicated. The word “disclosed” is deleted. Also, pages 5 and 7 of the disclosure are corrected as indicated by the Office Action.

Claim 5 is Not Indefinite

The Office Action states that “the convex ‘protuberances’ of lower adapter are not ‘identical’ to concave ‘indentations’ of the upper adapter.” Actually, as shown in FIG. 4, the upper adapter **405** has two protuberances **430** and **435**, and also has two indentations **450** and **455**. Likewise, the lower adapter **410** has two protuberances **440** and **445**, and also has two indentations **420** and **425**. Thus, the upper adapter and the lower adapter are identical, as claimed in claim 5.

Claim 1 Should be Allowed

Claim 1 is now amended to clarify that the outer surface of the spring is received as a screw. This is significantly different from the *Mudryk* where the inner surface of the spring screws onto a threaded lug. This amendment introduces no new matter, and is fully supported by the specification as originally filed.

Claim 7 Should be Allowed

Claim 7 is now amended to clarify that the removable device prevents unscrewing, as shown by element **825** in present FIG. 8. This is significantly different from *Mudryk* wherein the spring is screwed onto a threaded lug but is free to become unscrewed. This amendment introduces no new matter, and is fully supported by the specification as originally filed.

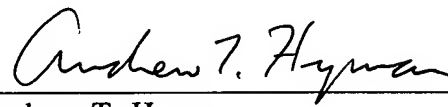
CONCLUSION

Because the cited references do not teach or suggest critical elements of the present amended claims, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are novel and patentable. Early allowance of the pending claims is earnestly solicited. Applicant would be grateful if the Examiner would please contact Applicant's attorney by telephone if the Examiner detects anything in the present response that might hinder a speedy allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 15, 2005

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